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RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(D)

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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-15	AID-01	AMAD-01	CIAE-00	C-01	DODE-00
	EB-01	HA-09	H-01	INRE-00	INR-01	IO-19	LAB-04
	L-03	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-01
	PM-01	PRS-01	P-01	RP-10	SIL-01	SNP-01	SP-01
	SR-01	SSO-00	SS-01	STR-20	TRSE-00	T-01	USIE-00
	DTC-01	FMP-01	/102W				

----------12FA95 251807Z /38

O 251621Z FEB 92 ZFF4
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8625
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 02071

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PGOV, MASS, PHUM, VE
SUBJECT: [redacted] ON THE
POST-FEBRUARY 4 POLITICAL SITUATION B1

REF: CARACAS 1918

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: IN A MEETING WITH POLOFF, [redacted]

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WAS THE PRIMARY CAUSE OF THE FEBRUARY 4 COUP ATTEMPT. B1
DISCONTENT HAD EXISTED FOR SOME TIME, HE STRESSED,
[redacted] RECOMMENDS THAT THE GOV
TAKE STEPS IMMEDIATELY TO BRING OTHER ACTORS INTO THE
POLITICAL GAME, I.E., TO DIFFUSE POWER. HE MENTIONED SUCH
SPECIFICS AS A WHOLESALE CABINET CHANGE, THE RESIGNATION
EN MASSE OF THE SUPREME COURT, AND A CONSTITUENT
ASSEMBLY. THE CRITICAL PERIOD FOR PREVENTING ANOTHER COUP
WILL LAST UNTIL JULY, WHEN A NEW DEFENSE MINISTER AND NEW
SERVICE COMMANDERS WILL BE NAMED. UNTIL THEN, MINISTER OF

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON
CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(D)
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 24 FEB 2017
DATE/CASE ID: 28 JUL 2008 200503656

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DEFENSE OCHOA ANTICH WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO PLAY AN "INDISPENSABLE" ROLE IN HELPING PREVENT A REPETITION OF FEBRUARY 4. [redacted] END SUMMARY.

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MEETING WITH [redacted]

3. POLOFF MET WITH [redacted] ON FEBRUARY 21 TO DISCUSS THE POST-COUP ATTEMPT POLITICAL SITUATION. [redacted] COMMENTED AS FOLLOWS.

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THE PROBLEM IS POLITICAL

4. ALTHOUGH THE "DETONATOR" OF THE FEBRUARY 4 ATTEMPTED

COUP MAY HAVE BEEN FEAR THAT CAP WAS GOING TO "SELL OUT" ON THE QUESTION OF THE FRONTIER WITH COLOMBIA IN THE GULF OF VENEZUELA. ITS BASIC CAUSE WAS THE [redacted] IT HAD GOTTEN SO BAD, [redacted] THAT NO ONE COULD DO ANYTHING ANY LONGER WITHOUT POLITICAL PATRONAGE. [redacted] MUCH MORE IMPORTANT IN EXPLAINING THE COUP ATTEMPT, [redacted] THAN THE OFFICERS' STANDARD OF LIVING OR THEIR ALLEGED DISSATISFACTION WITH NATIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY. IN THIS REGARD, HE CITED THE CASE OF A LONG-TERM WOMAN FRIEND -- A 36-YEAR OLD DOCTOR WITH 12 YEARS' EXPERIENCE, WHO IS HOLDING DOWN TWO JOBS YET MAKES ONLY 20,000 BS. (USD 300) A MONTH. IN COMPARISON WITH HER, [redacted] CONTINUED, A MAJOR OR LIEUTENANT-COLONEL MAKES AROUND 40,000 BS. SUCH AN OFFICER, HE EMPHASIZED, IS MUCH BETTER OFF THAN HIS CIVILIAN COUNTERPART. DISCONTENT, FURTHERMORE, HAS BEEN AROUND A LONG TIME. [redacted]

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THE CONSEQUENCES

5. IF THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT IMMEDIATELY TAKE STEPS TO [redacted] TO COMBAT CORRUPTION, THE "NATURAL RESULT" WILL BE THE FORMATION OF A COALITION OF STUDENTS, MEMBERS OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS, THE [redacted] POLITICAL PARTY [redacted] AND, EVENTUALLY, B1

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[redacted] IN GENERAL, THE GOVERNMENT HAS TO TAKE STEPS TO BRING MORE ACTORS INTO THE POLITICAL GAME, I.E., TO DIFFUSE POWER. FORMER PRESIDENT CALDERA'S CALL FOR NEGOTIATIONS AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE OCHOA ANTICH'S FOR REFLECTION PROVIDE PARTIAL PRETEXTS FOR BEGINNING SUCH A PROCESS. [redacted] SUGGESTED THAT WHOLESALE CABINET CHANGES, THE RESIGNATION OF THE SUPREME COURT EN MASSE, AND THE CONVOCATION OF A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WOULD BE GOOD STEPS TO TAKE. THE "CRITICAL PERIOD" DURING WHICH THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE OF ANOTHER COUP ATTEMPT WILL LAST UNTIL THIS JULY, WHEN A NEW DEFENSE MINISTER AND NEW SERVICE COMMANDERS WILL BE NAMED. IF, IN THE INTERVAL, THE MILITARY OPT FOR ANOTHER COUP ATTEMPT, THEY WILL JUSTIFY IT BY CITING PUBLIC PROSECUTOR/OMBUDSMAN

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INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-15	AID-01	AMAD-01	CIAE-00	C-01	DODE-00
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O 251621Z FEB 92 ZFF4
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 CARACAS 02071

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PGOV, MASS, PHUM, VE
SUBJECT: RET. GENERAL MULLER ROJAS ON THE

ESCOVAR SALOM'S PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT THE RULE OF LAW IS LACKING IN VENEZUELA, A SITUATION WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF SOME [redacted] ALSO SAID THAT HE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED, IN CASE OF ANOTHER COUP ATTEMPT, IF THE REBELS CITED THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT FOR VENEZUELA IN THIS SAME REGARD.

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CAP PART OF THE PROBLEM

6. IN REGARD TO FIGHTING CORRUPTION, [redacted] EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM THAT ANYTHING WOULD BE DONE. THE PROBLEM, HE NOTED, WAS CAP'S CIRCLE, WHICH INCLUDED [redacted] IN HANDLING THE MILITARY, [redacted] CAP HAS SERIOUSLY ERRED

BY ALLOWING THE NATIONAL GUARD, "THE PRAETORIAN GUARD OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES," TO PROVIDE SECURITY FOR MIRAFLORES PALACE IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE COUP ATTEMPT.

DEFENSE MINISTER OCHOA ANTICH

7. IF THE GOVERNMENT MANAGES TO LAST UNTIL THIS JULY, [redacted] MINISTER OF DEFENSE OCHOA ANTICH WILL DESERVE MUCH OF THE CREDIT. NOTING THAT THE COUP ATTEMPT CLEARLY REVEALED THAT GENERALS AND COLONELS HAVE NO REAL POWER IN THE MILITARY, [redacted] ONLY

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EXCEPTION WAS THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, WHO ENJOYED THE RESPECT OF ALL, BOTH REBELS AND LOYALISTS. OCHOA ANTICH'S BEHAVIOR TOWARDS THE REBELS, WHICH MANIFESTED RESPECT, AND HIS CONCILIATORY ATTITUDE, WHICH HELPED KEEP BLOODSHED TO A MINIMUM, HAVE MADE HIM "INDISPENSABLE" TO THE GOVERNMENT IN RETAINING THE LOYALTY OF THE MILITARY. ALTHOUGH OCHOA ANTICH WANTED TO RESIGN [redacted] URGED HIM NOT TO, ARGUING THAT THE ACCEPTANCE OF A MINISTRY ENTAILED RESPONSIBILITY TO RUN IT UNTIL THE END OF ONE'S NATURAL TENURE (THIS JULY). [redacted] THAT HE THOUGHT OCHOA ANTICH WOULD INDEED AGREE TO REMAIN IN OFFICE UNTIL JULY. [redacted]

8. [redacted] SAID THAT THE USG HAD BEEN DOING THE RIGHT THING: KEEPING A LOW PUBLIC PROFILE. THERE HAS BEEN "BAD FEELING" HERE RECENTLY ABOUT FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT, HE CLAIMED, CITING AS AN EXAMPLE THE "EXTREMELY NEGATIVE" IMPRESSION WHICH THE VISIT OF THE OAS DELEGATION A FEW DAYS AFTER THE COUP ATTEMPT HAD MADE ON CIVILIANS AND MILITARY MEN ALIKE. MANY HERE BELIEVE THAT VENEZUELA SHOULD RESOLVE ITS PROBLEMS BY ITSELF. [redacted]

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